

STEAMBOAT DAYS

ON AMERICA'S RIVERS



.....
An Activity Book for Educators

1999 Teachers Guide



Dear Educator:

The Greater Cincinnati Tall Stacks Commission has especially designed **Steamboat Days on America's Rivers: An Activity Book For Educators**—whether you teach fourth grade, junior high, high school or adult education classes. We are confident that the activities offered in this book will enliven your educational efforts.

If your students are planning to visit Tall Stacks this book can help you prepare them to get the most out of the event itself. When students see the **Delta Queen** and the **Mississippi Queen** docked at the port in Cincinnati, we want them to see more than just these twentieth century excursion boats. We hope they will also be reminded of the thousands of steamboats and the millions of people whose lives were touched by the "tall stacks" in the nineteenth century.

Although many children will visit Tall Stacks as part of a classroom field trip, many more will visit with their families. Through the in-class activities suggested in this book, your students can become “teachers” for their own parents, brothers and sisters. They can help their families understand the rich history behind Tall Stacks and America's steamboating era. Another great resource is our website—www.tallstacks.com.

After Tall Stacks this book will continue to enrich your classroom in the years to come. We believe the topics and the themes explored have an enduring value for everyone involved in teaching United States and local history.

Steamboat Days on America's Rivers: An Activity Book is possible only because of the contribution of ideas by many classroom teachers and the generous support of Ashland Inc.

Finally, I want to thank every dedicated educator who sees in Tall Stacks an opportunity to expand the knowledge and imagination of his or her students. Your efforts make our hard work worthwhile.

Sincerely yours,

Richard J. Greiwe, Executive Director
Greater Cincinnati Tall Stacks Commission, Inc.



Note to Educators:

Steamboat Days on America's Rivers:

An Activity Book For Educators is designed to provide ideas and classroom resources. These are not lesson plans, but elements of lesson plans. You, the teacher, know best how to select and tailor the suggestions in the book to the interests, age level and abilities of the children in your classroom.

Section One focuses on a sampling of the kind of primary sources used by historians to study life on America's rivers in the age of the steamboat. Each exercise utilizes a visual resource—photo, map, document, etc.—along with appropriate passages from period documents and oral histories. By helping your student learn to “read” these primary sources, you will not only teach them about life on America's rivers in the 1800s, you will also teach them basic skills used by historians.

Section Two provides additional materials to support a Steamboat Day in your classroom: copies of old broadsides; tickets; menus; samples of period clothing; the lyrics of roustabout songs; period and oral history descriptions. Information in Section One and Section Three will also be helpful in staging a fun and successful Steamboat Day. Some particularly helpful ideas have been cross-referenced in the text.

Section Three offers a wide variety of additional activities prepared by classroom teachers.

Section Four is an annotated list of resources. In addition to the books, information is provided about videotapes, films, recordings and area museums and facilities that relate to America's rivers in the age of steamboating.

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Daniel Hurley and Susan Redman-Rengstorf,
Applied History Associates

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Section One

Primary Source Exercises

1 A Long Walk Home

Before the steamboat, settlers and farmers traveled by flatboats to points down America's rivers. Flatboats were cheap to build, and they moved down stream fairly easily. The biggest drawback of a flatboat was that it could not come back upstream against the current. For new settlers, this was not a problem. After arriving at their new home, the flatboat was simply disassembled and the wood was used to build the first cabin. But for established farmers from Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana or Ohio, who needed to move crops to market, it meant a long walk home from Memphis or New Orleans, the major wholesale markets for western grain.

Focus Questions

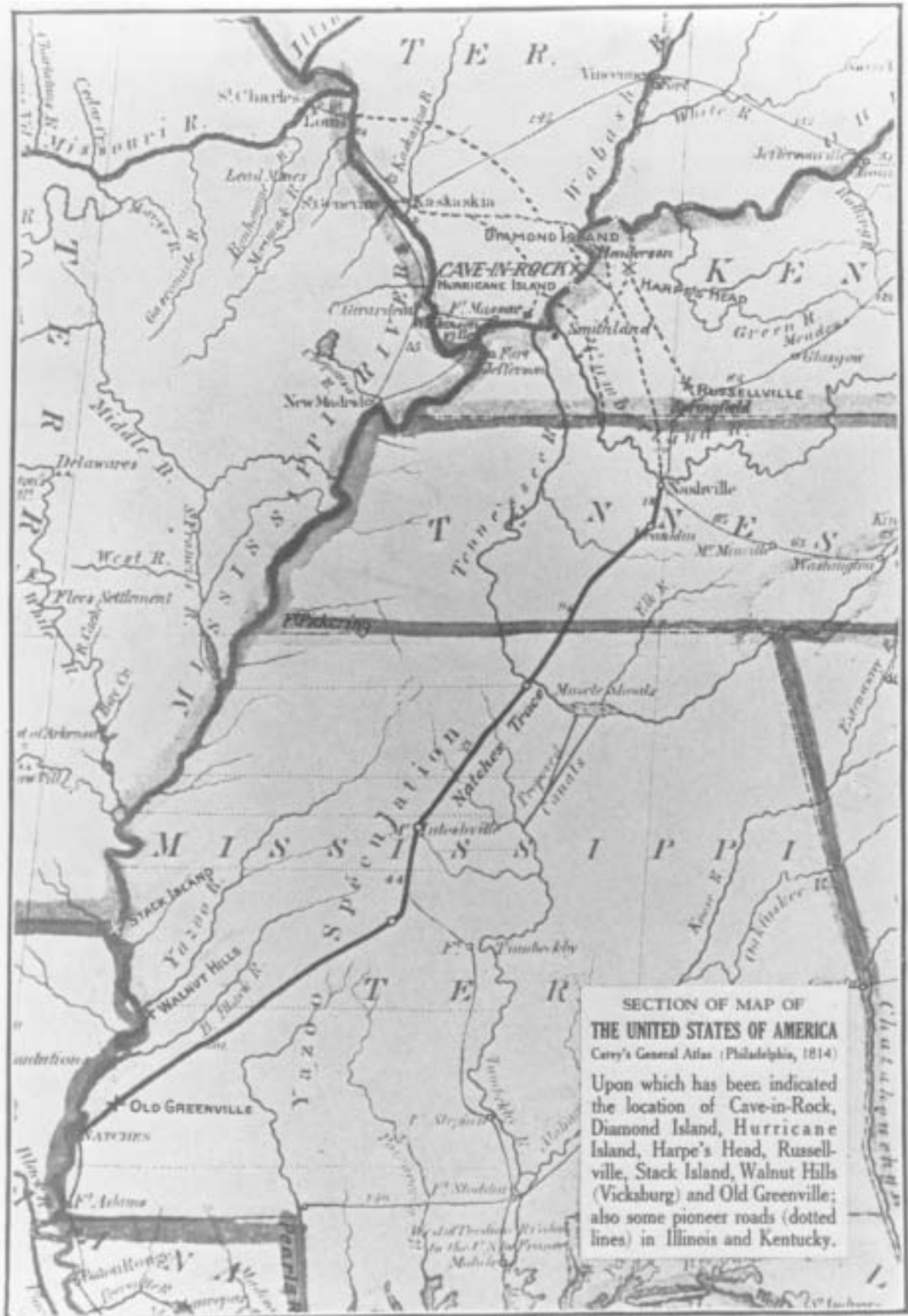
- ▼ How did flatboats impact settlement of the western lands?
- ▼ How did flatboats impact the western economy?

Procedure

Ask students to:

- ▼ Locate Memphis and New Orleans on the map on the opposite page. Many farmers living in Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky took their corn on a flatboat to sell in New Orleans. How would the farmer get home before the steamboat? after the steamboat?
[Before steamboats, farmers walked home on the Natchez Trace, a trip which could take four to six months. After the steamboat, farmers could buy a ticket and ride back upriver.]
- ▼ Read aloud the excerpt from Bitha Devol's 1869 letter to her husband heading for New Orleans. How would you feel if your father or mother went on a six-month business trip every year?
- ▼ Guess why anyone would use a flatboat once steamboats were invented.
[The flatboat remained the cheapest way to travel down river, but the quickest and easiest way up the river was by steamboat.]

• • • • •
"I felt so in hopes you would sell out at Memphis. I can't bear to think of your being gone all this long lonesome winter... I am completely out of patience with flat-boating. Don't ask me to agree to your going again, for I can't do it."
— A letter from Bitha Devol to William Devol, December 29, 1869



2 A One-Way River Becomes A Two-Way Highway

The introduction of the first steamboat in 1811 revolutionized river travel. Within a few years passengers and goods could move quickly and cheaply both up and down river. But flatboats did not disappear from America's rivers. Flatboats remained a cheap and important way for many settlers to reach the West. And many farmers, no longer burdened by the long walk home, moved products downstream to market on cheap, easy-to-build flatboats, but then bought a ticket on a steamboat for the ride home. Until the 1880s steamboats and flatboats jostled for space on the western rivers.

Focus Questions

- ▼ What were the advantages and disadvantages of flatboats and steamboats?
- ▼ How did flatboats and steamboats work together to open the new Western territories?
[Flatboats cheaply moved families and goods to new lands and markets down river; steamboats offered fast and easy travel between markets up and down river.]

Procedure

Ask students to:

- ▼ Look at the print on the opposite page. Compare and contrast the design of flatboats and steamboats?
- ▼ How did the flatboat move through the water? How did the steamboat?
[Note the flatboat crew using oars.]
- ▼ What kinds of products would you guess were on the flatboat? the steamboat?
- ▼ Ask the students what they would like and dislike about a flatboat trip [Although flatboat passengers got close to nature, the trip was slow and flatboats spent a lot of time stuck on sandbars.]

Background

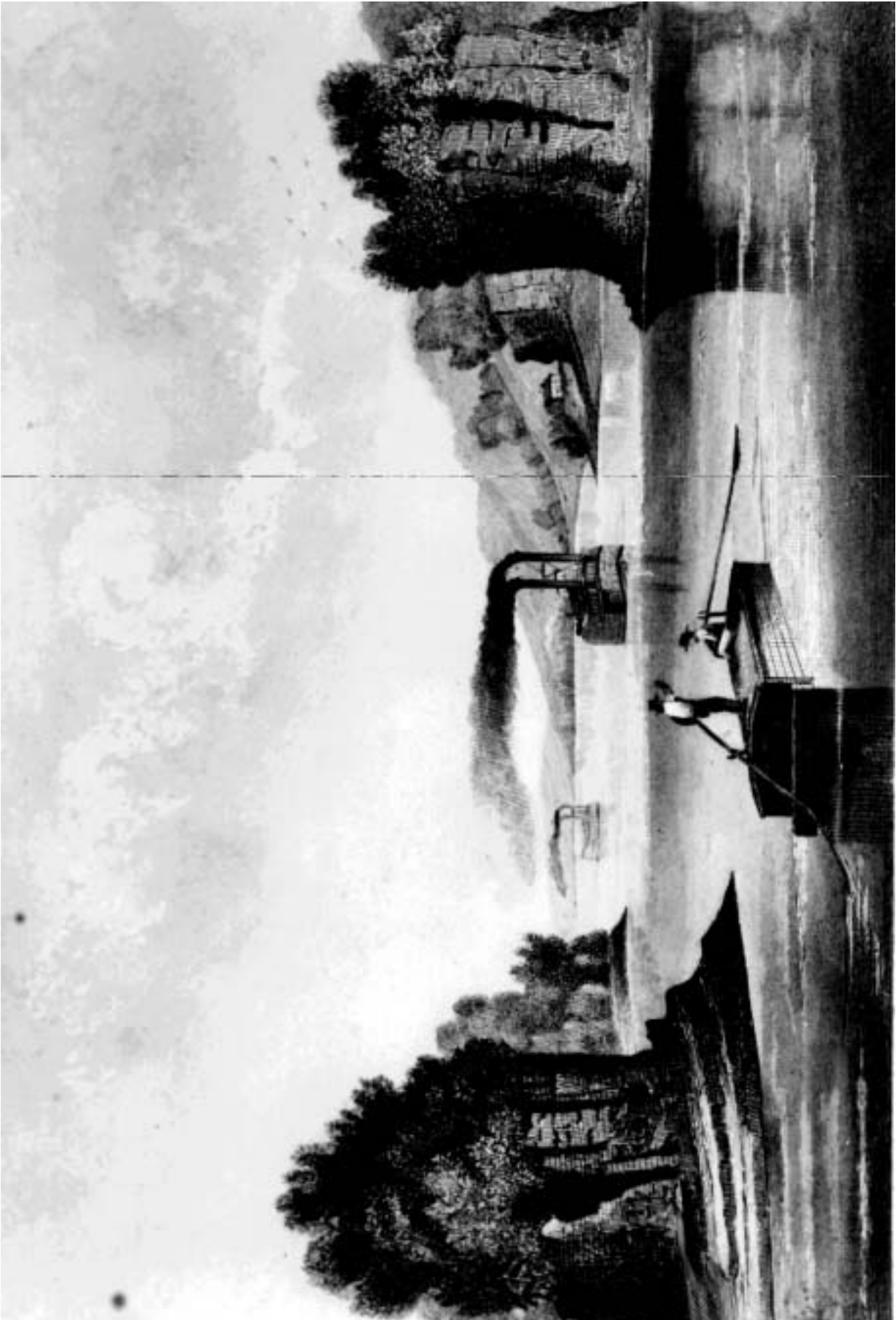
Until the late nineteenth century, a common practice was for a family or two to hire a flatboat crew to build them a boat and then guide them to new homes down river. It was not unusual to see flatboats loaded down with furniture, wagons, crops and even farm animals.

• • • • •
“The roof or deck of the boat was not unlike a farmyard, being covered with hay, ploughs, carts, wagons... spinning wheels of the matrons. Even the sides of the floating-mass were loaded with wheels of the different vehicles which themselves lay on the roof.”

—John James Audubon on his wedding trip (1808)

• • • • •
“Once or twice of a night we would see a steamboat slipping along in the dark, and now and then she would belch a whole world of sparks up out of her chimbleys, and they would rain down in the river and look awful pretty; then she would turn a corner and her lights would wink out and her powwow shut off and leave the river still again...”

—Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huck Finn* (1884)



3 Steamboat City/Steamboat Town

On the next page are photographs of Pittsburgh's Public Landing and the wharf at Madison, Indiana. While the flatboat was instrumental in opening western lands to new settlers, the steamboat was instrumental in opening western markets to trade with eastern ports like New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore as well as Europe and South America. Between 1811 and 1850, the number of steamboats that worked the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers increased dramatically, creating many new trading towns. A large public landing, like Pittsburgh's, was not required. For many towns, a simple wharf boat was often enough to connect the smallest river town to trade with the world.

Focus Questions

- ▼ How did the steamboat impact United States economy?
- ▼ How was trade from small farm towns and bigger cities linked?

Procedure

Ask students to:

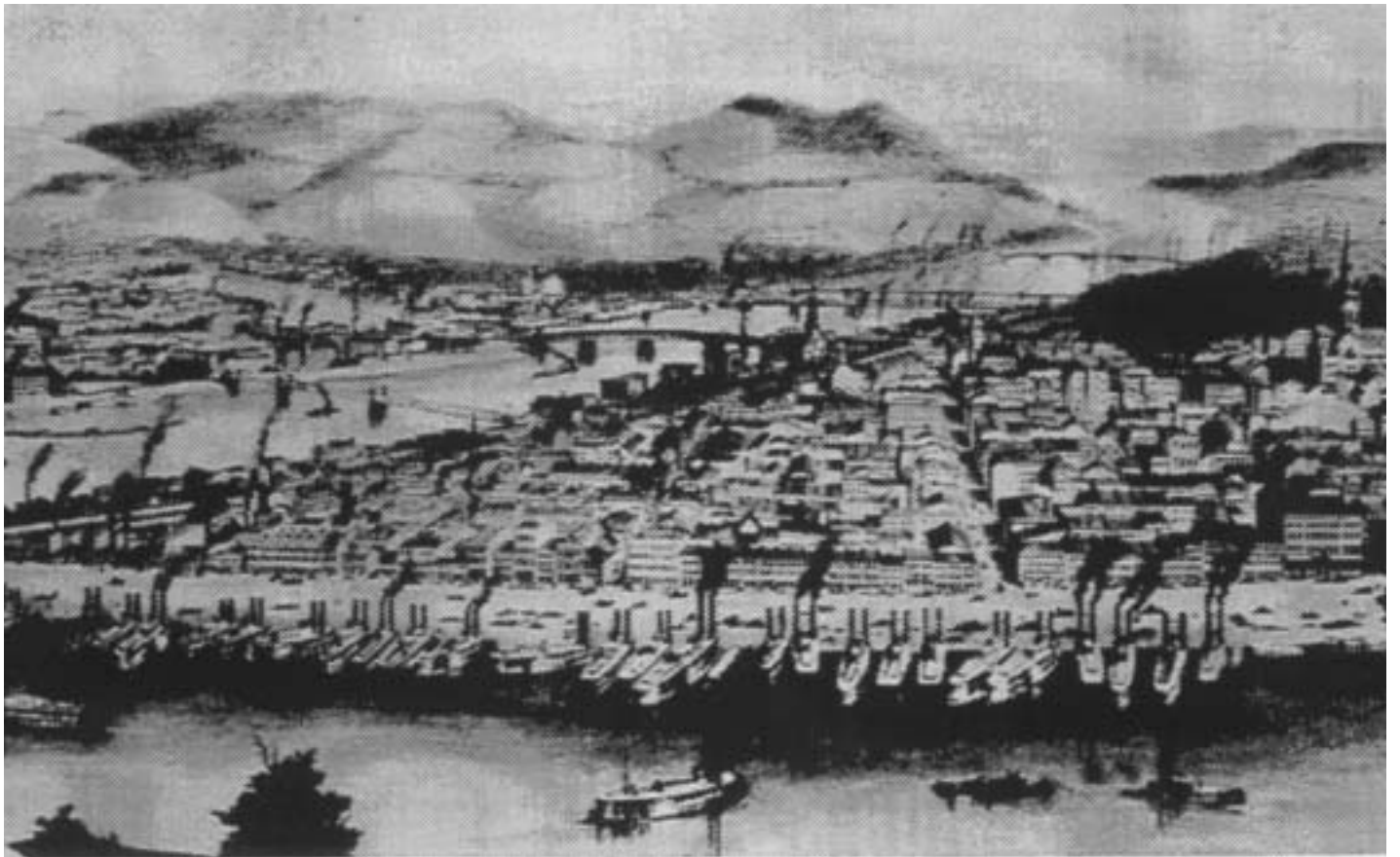
- ▼ Compare and contrast photographs of the Public Landing in Pittsburgh and the wharf boat at Madison, Indiana.
- ▼ How are the two ports different?
- ▼ Why are more steamboats tied up in Pittsburgh than in Madison?
[As a major manufacturing center, Pittsburgh was a busy port. In addition, if this photograph was taken in late summer, the river may have been too shallow for boats to travel safely.]
- ▼ Discuss why the boats are at Pittsburgh and Madison.
[Steamboats made many stops to pick up and drop off products.]
- ▼ Were the products traded in a bigger city port different from those of the smaller, farm town? If so, how and why?

Background

For the first time, steamboats provided a quick, cheap and regular link between river cities and towns. Economically, steamboats opened up America's interior and connected America's farmers and traders to larger markets. Socially, steamboats linked Americans of all walks of life and from different regions.

• • • • •
“Once a day a cheap, gaudy packet arrived upward from St. Louis, another downward from “Keokuk”. Before these events, the day was glorious with expectancy; after them, the day was a dead and empty thing. Not only the boys, but the whole village, felt this.”
—Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (1883)

View of Madison, Indiana, c. 1870 (top)
View of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, c. 1890 (bottom)



4 Running On A Heavy Dew

The steamboats that worked the Ohio and Mississippi River systems in the nineteenth century were, technically speaking, “packet boats.” Packets carried both freight and passengers.

The distinctive feature of the packets that worked America's inland rivers were their shallow draft hulls which road anywhere from a mere 15 inches to five feet below the water line. This allowed packets to run in very shallow stretches of the river during dry seasons. They were an amazement to European visitors in the nineteenth century because packets did not look anything like the sailing ships that European visitors knew from their native countries.

Like any other complex piece of equipment, the steamboat required constant maintenance and upkeep. After many boiler explosions and fires aboard steamboats, in 1838 the federal government began requiring all steamboats running the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to undergo regular safety inspections.

Focus Questions

- ▼ How did the unique design of the packet boat help steamboats travel the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers?
- ▼ What are the distinctive features of a packet boat?
- ▼ Why do some say that steamboats could run on a “heavy dew”?

Procedure

Make copies of the photo on page 9. Ask students to: Examine the Certificate of Inspection for the Passenger Steamer, **Guiding Star**.

- ▼ Where was the **Guiding Star** built? When was it built? What state and district issued this inspection certificate?
- ▼ How many, and what size, were the engines on the **Guiding Star**?
- ▼ Note the number of state-rooms, berths, and first-, second-cabin and steerage/deck passengers. How was the crew organized?
- ▼ Discuss what parts of the boat were inspected? [lifeboats, boilers, flues...]

• • • • •
“You look at the size of a steamboat above the water, and you think, ‘Good Heavens, it must be underneath the water a great distance...but here on the Ohio, just four or five feet...Why we build packets that could run on a heavy dew!’”
—Steamboat historian John Briley, 1988

• • • • •
“The innumerable steamboats, which are the stage coaches and fly wagons of this land of lakes and rivers, are totally unlike any I have ever seen in Europe, and greatly superior to them.”
—Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832)

Certificate of Inspection for the **Guiding Star**, New Orleans, 1881

5 Workhorse of the River

Some steamboats competed with each other for passengers by offering luxurious first-class accommodations, excellent food and exciting entertainment. Yet for all their luxury, steamboats also became the workhorses of the river transporting freight from port to port. One example was the **Thompson Dean**, built in 1872 at Cincinnati. Under Captain William B. Miller, the **Dean** worked each winter in the Memphis-to-New Orleans cotton trade. On December 6, 1875, Captain Miller wrote his children a lengthy letter describing his work.

Focus Questions

- ▼ What important tasks were performed by a packet boat in the nineteenth century?
- ▼ What conditions did people have to endure when they traveled by packet in the nineteenth century.

Procedure

Read aloud the excerpt from Captain Miller's letter. Ask students to:

- ▼ Compare and contrast traveling by packet boat in the nineteenth century with traveling by plane today.

• • • • •
“Within the spacious and luxuriant cabins are often heard the bewitching strains of sweet music rendered by the boat's orchestra...with every comfort of home, handsomely furnished cabins, heated by steam and lighted by electricity... and good beds, with every officer in the service from the affable and genial captain down to the lowest petty officer most courteous and desirous of adding to the enjoyment and comfort of patrons.”

—Pittsburgh and Cincinnati Packet Company, **Souvenir Program** (1895)

• • • • •
“Our brass band plays at the principal points during the day and in the evenings our excellent string band amuses the passengers in the cabin.”

—Captain W.B. Miller to his children (1875)

Letter, W.B. Miller to his children, December 6, 1875

THE GREAT
Memphis & New Orleans Passenger Steamer

THOMPSON DEAN

W. B. Miller, Master.

Geo. Millenderger, Clerk.

Upward bound Dec 6, 187

My Dear Children,

Every other Wednesday night the Dean leaves Memphis, usually carrying 40 passengers. On Thursdays it stops at 18 plantations and towns adding 30, 50, or 100 bales of cotton and hundreds of sacks of cotton seed at each place, and passengers are getting on and off at every landing...The cotton bales, as you know, are about five feet long, two feet thick and three feet wide, and weigh about 500 pounds each. The seed is in sacks nearly the size of a wheat sack and weigh about 120 pounds per sack..."400 miles later at Vicksburg" [we have] loaded 5,000 bales and 10,000 sacks, and the cotton is twelve tiers high on our guards. If our passengers get a peek of daylight, they have to go on the hurricane deck or in the pilothouse. Our guards are dragging in the water and our mates and 100 men on deck are worn out with four days of constant work day and night."

winter which I undergo every trip - I wear winter underclothing and overcoats in Memphis one week and the next in New Orleans I put on my lightest underwear and go in my shirt sleeves for comfort - Down there the leaves are green on the trees and the gardens full of roses as they are with you in summer - On my table as I

• • • • •
“The work of a fireman is as hard as any in the world; though he has only four hours in the day and four in the night to keep up the fires, yet the heat of the boilers, the exposure to the cutting cold night air when in deep perspiration, the quantity of brandy he drinks to prevent falling sick, the icy cold water poured into the burning throat, must, sooner or later, destroy the soundest and strongest constitution.”
—Friedrich Gerstaecker (1838)

• • • • •
“The deck hands were men of all work about the steamboat. They joined in the wooding, manned capstan and pumps, handled cargo, and generally served as brawn and muscle men.”
—Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers* (1949)

• • • • •
“I first wanted to be a cabin-boy, so that I could come out with a white apron on and shake a tablecloth over the side, where all my old comrades could see me; later I thought I would rather be the deck-hand who stood on the end of the stage-plank with the coil of rope in his hand, because he was particularly conspicuous...”
—Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (1883)

• • • • •
“Boy after boy managed to get on the river. The minister's son became an engineer. The doctor's and the post-master's sons became "mud clerks;" the wholesale liquor dealer's son became a bar-keeper on a boat; four sons of the chief merchant, and two sons of the county judge, became pilots. Pilot was the grandest position of all.”
—Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (1883)

6 Pilots and Deckhands

Steamboats seemed to move effortlessly up and down river. In reality, they required large crews organized to perform a wide variety of tasks. Boats that made long trips required the crew to live as well as work on the boat for weeks and months at a time. Steamboats provided many new kinds of jobs for those who enjoyed travel and did not mind hard physical labor. [also see Exercise 15]

Focus Questions

- ▼ What jobs were necessary to run a steamboat?
- ▼ How was the work environment on the steamboat organized?

Procedure

Make copies of the next page. Ask students to:

- ▼ Note the wages and benefits of each job on the steamboat **C.W. Batchelor**. Discuss the wages in relation to different responsibilities.
- ▼ Compare and contrast the jobs of the Master, Pilot, deckhands, cabin boys, etc.
- ▼ Can you tell how long the work period was? Do you think that the wages were fair considering the nature of the different jobs?

7 Moving Goods By River

As new towns grew up along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, the steamboat was an important link picking up and delivering goods of all kinds. Not unlike today's large semi-trucks or airplanes, steamboats carried just about anything that could fit on the decks. Some boats were so tightly packed that passengers hardly had room to move. In fact, boat owners made their biggest profits delivering freight.

Focus Questions

- ▼ What kinds of goods were transported on steamboats?
- ▼ How did the goods transported by steamboats help to keep the growing country connected?

Procedure

Make copies of the next page and ask students to consider:

- ▼ What is a bill of lading? Think of your last purchase. Did your bill look similar to this one? If so, how? If not, how was it different?
- ▼ Identify the steamboat and determine where the boat is from and what town the boat is bound for.
- ▼ Discuss some items on the bill. What were “dry goods,” “bed cords,” and “plough lines?” Try to imagine how some of the items were used. Are they still used today? If so, are they used in the same way or differently?

• • • • •
“I have seen the boat hailed from the shore, and when she stopped her engines without rounding to, the person hailing could call to the captain, ‘bring me up a XXX barrel of flour;’ another would want a XX; another wanted a keg of sugar, twenty-five pounds of coffee, five pounds of tea, etc.”

—*Cincinnati Gazette* (1875)



**IN GOOD ORDER AND WELL CONDITIONED, BY
BARR & LODWICK.**

for account and risk of owners in and upon the good Steam Boat called the *Sun Pike* whereof *Armstrong* is Master for the present voyage, now lying in the Ohio river and bound for

James Lodwick
Portsmouth

2	Bags Coffee	368
1	Bbl Rum	300
1/2	" wine	150
1	" Sugar	276
1/2	Chest Tea	62
1	Qty Cloves	20
1	" Pepper	23
1	" Rice	40
1	" Opium	20
1	" Indigo	10
2	Doz Bed cards	20
1	" Blough Lines	08
5	half Boxes Raisins	75
2	Drums Fig	25
2	half Boxes Chocolate	50
2	Reams Wrapping Paper	30
1/2	Qty Tobacco	78
1	Bundle Chains	70
1	Bag Cork	6
1	Bot Gunpowder Tea	9
3	Bars Steel	85
1	Bbl Sugar	38
1	Doz Spades & Shovel	38
1/2	" Sea Nettle	35
7	Bundles Lead	100
		<u>1996</u>

To say: *Portsmouth Ohio*
Sandris ad in Margin

2	Qty Powder	60
1	Box Sherry	12
4	half Bbl Beer	400
1	Box dry goods	350
1	" do do	320
1	" Belonies	61
1	Bbl Queensware	75
1	Box do	50
1	Blough	75
1	Band Box	

1403
1976
3379
7845

Being marked and numbered as in the margin, and to be delivered, without delay, in like good order and well conditioned at the aforesaid port of *Portsmouth* (unavoidable accidents and the dangers of the river only excepted) unto *James Lodwick* or to his assigns he or they paying freight for the said Goods, at the rate of 25 cents per 100 lb

In witness whereof, the Master or Purser of the said Steam Boat hath affirmed to 2 Bills of Lading, all of this tenor and date, one of which being accomplished, the other to stand void.

Cincinnati, 14th April 1824

8 River Dangers

For many Americans, steamboat travel often combined luxury and excitement. Although safer than flatboats, changing river conditions and overworked equipment sometimes led to dramatic, and deadly, river accidents. Major worries were boiler explosions, thick fog, ice, and sandbars. It was not uncommon for passengers to witness exciting, even dangerous, events as the steamboat maneuvered its way through strong river currents.

Focus Questions

- ▼ What dangers did people face in the nineteenth century when they traveled by steamboat?
- ▼ To what predicaments must a river pilot be alert?

Procedure

Ask students to:

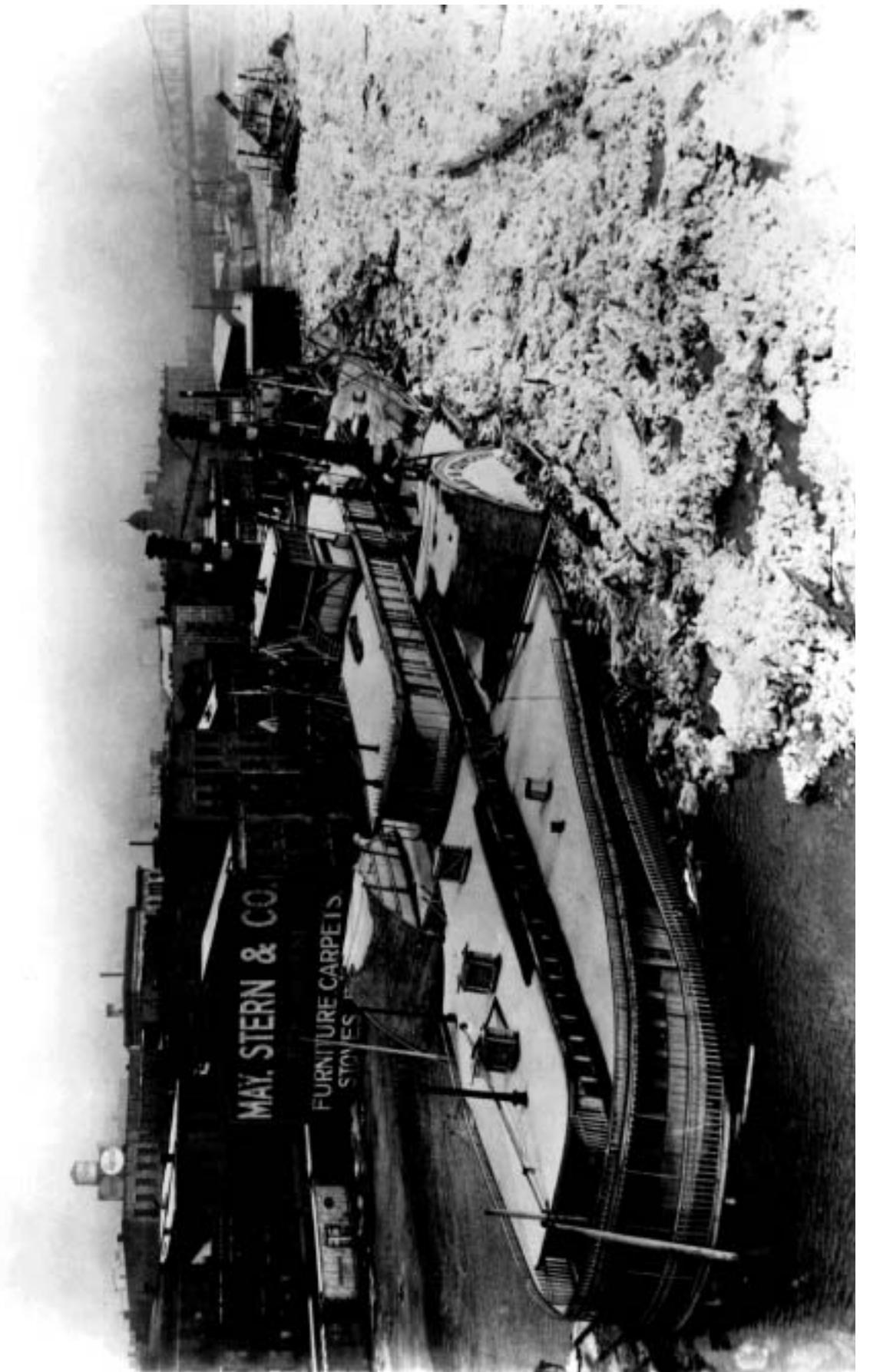
- ▼ Make a list of the dangers that a steamboat might face during a trip. [Sandbars, fog, “snags” (logs or stumps sticking up from the bottom of the river), “sawyers” (logs or whole trees bobbing just below the surface of the water), and ice.]
- ▼ Describe what they see in the photo on the next page. What problems could ice cause a packet?
[Delay; serious damage to the paddlewheel; sinking caused by huge holes in the hull.]
- ▼ Describe the feelings of the captain of a packet grounded on a sandbar or stuck in ice. What would you do in that situation?

Background

Before the modern system of stationary high-lift dams created safe pool stages in America's major inland rivers, pilots had to know where the channel meandered or they could ground on a sandbar. They also had to be on the lookout for logs bobbing just below the surface [“sawyers”] and for stumps or logs stuck in the river bottom [“snags”]. Both could rip dangerous holes in the hull of the boat. And when fog blinded their vision, a pilot's only choice was to run dead slow, groping toward shore, where the boat could tie up until the fog lifted.

In winter, ice posed a great threat. Before the modern dam system, the rivers were much shallower and, therefore, froze much more quickly than they do today. Ice could hold a packet in its clutches—or rip apart the hull.

Boats sunk after ice jam broke at Cincinnati, 1918



9A Changeable River

The photographs on the next pages illustrate the changing nature of the Ohio River at Lawrenceburg, Indiana. One photograph shows three steamboats grounded on the “Lawrenceburg Sandbar.” The other shows the same area during the great Flood of 1884. America’s inland rivers of the nineteenth century were constantly changing.

Focus Questions

- ▼ How much did the nineteenth century river vary in depth compared to the river today?
- ▼ How did changes in river depth affect the people who depended on the river for their livelihood?

Procedure

Ask students to:

- ▼ Describe what they see in each photo.
[In the first photo, the Ohio River is so high that only the very tops of tall buildings remain above water. In the second photo, three steamboats are stuck on a sandbar.]
- ▼ Guess how these changes in the river affected farmers who harvested their crops in late summer and needed transportation to markets in New Orleans.
[At harvest time the rivers were frequently at their lowest depths, delaying the time they could ship it to market.]
- ▼ What characteristics would a boat need to navigate on the nineteenth century river?
[The boat would need a broad, flat bottom that did not go very deep into the water.]
- ▼ If you live near a navigable river, find the weather report in the daily paper. It will include a section called “River Levels.” How does this compare with nineteenth century water levels? What accounts for the difference?
[Because of the modern high-lift concrete dams, the river is maintained at a more constant level.]

Background

Low water was the biggest problem on America's rivers in the nineteenth century. The major challenge facing those who depended on river navigation was to design boats capable of traveling the maximum number of days each year.

• • • • •
“If we got stuck on a sandbar, we’d just call the dam up above and asked them to release some water, and they’d send us down a couple of feet.”
—Captain Fred Way Jr., steamboat captain

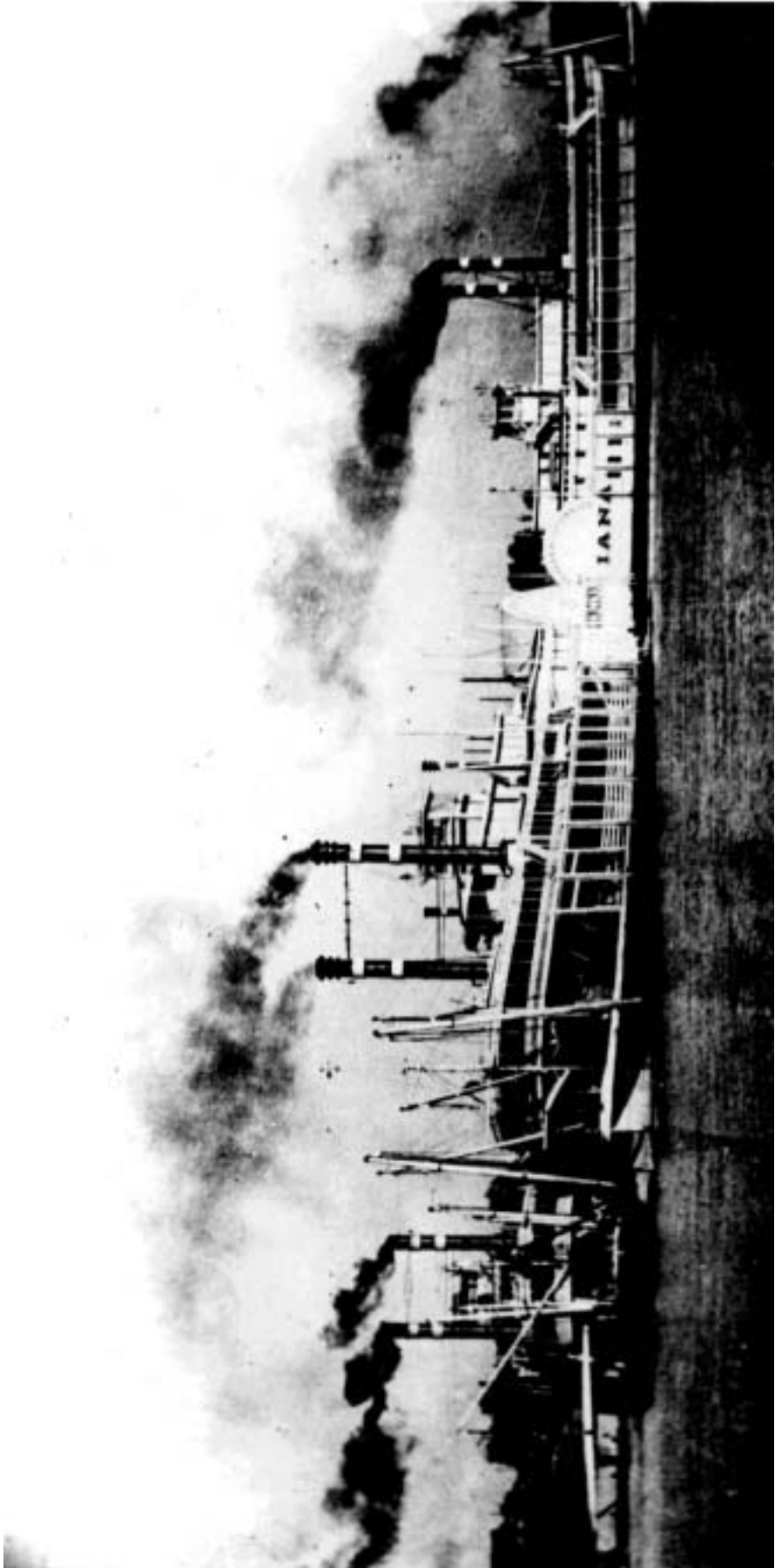
• • • • •
“You could find yourself really stuck on a sandbar, draped over the terrain, and three weeks later be rolling into 8 to 12 feet of water with no problem. Your boat had to be able to handle all these extremes.”
—Jack Custer, steamboat historian

The first steamboats introduced to the Ohio River [1811-1816] had deep-draft hulls like ocean going vessels. As a result, they often ran aground.

In 1816 Captain Henry Shreve designed a broad, flat-bottomed boat that could “sail **on** the the water instead of **in** it” [emphases added]. Although boat designers made steady improvements to the Ohio River packet, the basic design was set by Shreve.

Beginning in 1885, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began the task of building a system of navigation dams designed to maintain the Ohio River at a minimum nine foot pool year round. The first system of dams was completed in 1929. In the 1950s the Corps began construction of a second system of modern, concrete high-lift dams. The river can still flood [these are not flood-control dams], but it no longer dries up in late summer.





10 Environmental Impact

Early steamboats burned huge amounts of wood. See the belching smokestacks on the next page! Steamboats had to stop every five to six hours to take on a new load of firewood. Loading the necessary wood [called “wooding”] demanded a lot of manpower. That’s why the lowest level of passenger ticket required that the passenger help carry wood onto the boat.

Focus Questions

- ▼ What impact did the introduction of the steamboat have on the environment of America’s river valleys?
- ▼ How has concern about the environment changed since the nineteenth century?

Procedure

Ask students to:

- ▼ Guess what impact steamboats had on the environment. [Deforestation along the river to provide fuel; air pollution.]
- ▼ Discuss why this environmental cost did not seem significant in the 1850s and 1860s. [Belching smokestacks—whether from a steamboat, a factory or a railroad engine—symbolized economic prosperity, not pollution, to the people of nineteenth century America.]
- ▼ Compare the cutting of large amounts of wood in the Ohio Valley for steamboats with what's happening today in the world's rain forests. Why are we more concerned today?

Background

In the 1830s Frances Trollope, an English visitor to America, described the forests of the Ohio Valley as a “thousand miles of vegetable wall.” To Mrs. Trollope the forest was a symbol of America's natural beauty. But to a nation of farmers, forests were “the most troublesome of growths.” Before fields of grain could wave in the breeze, farmers had to cut and clear millions of acres of trees. Farmers were therefore only too happy to sell the felled lumber to passing steamboats. And steamboat captains needed to constantly feed their boat's “all-devouring furnace.” Every five or six hours, the crew and deck passengers holding the cheapest fares threw themselves into the ritual of “wooding.”

• • • • •
“The all-devouring furnace. In five or six hours it will need a fresh supply and the operation will be repeated at least 30 or 40 times in the 1,200 miles.”
—Charles Mackay, *Life and Liberty in America* (1859)

• • • • •
“When the boat stopped to take on wood, the deck passengers “ran, or rather sprang and vaulted over each other’s heads to the shore, whence they all assisted in carrying wood to supply the steam engine. The performance of this duty being a stipulated part of the payment of their passage.”
—Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832)

Steamboat stuck on sandbar at Lawrenceburg, Indiana, c. 1890’s
Queen City belches thick, black smoke into the air (p. 22)



Section Two

Steamboat Day: A Classroom Experience

11 Charting Your Course

The most intriguing aspect of America’s rivers in the nineteenth century was not the steamboats that plied its waters but the people who built them, worked on them and traveled on them. Learning about the captains, the deckhands and the passengers whose lives depended on the Tall Stacks is the most important reason for studying America’s rivers.

This section is designed to help you and your students bring alive the human side of Tall Stacks by holding a “Steamboat Day” event in your classroom. The following pages present specific suggestions that will help your Steamboat Day come alive with people. A wide variety of resource materials deal with the people who worked and traveled on the old American river packets.

Plan Your Day

“Steamboat Day” is not a rigid program or a pre-scripted drama. You must decide how much time and energy you and your students can devote to it, and then pick and choose the elements that fit your situation. Here is an idea of what a full-blown Steamboat Day experience might include:

- ▼ Begin several weeks in advance of the actual day with Activity 12: “Announcing Your Trip.”
- ▼ Schedule time to work through some or all of the primary source exercises in Section One in preparation for the day.
- ▼ Have each child choose a role for the day in plenty of time to do some research and keep a diary [see page 37]. One of the first activities on the actual Steamboat Day is for each student to introduce his or her character for the day and tell where he or she is going and why. Part of the day can also be set aside to share diary entries.
- ▼ Decorate your classroom to capture the feel of a nineteenth century packet saloon—including hints of the cargo filling every available space on the decks.
- ▼ Begin the day with a report from the captain or pilot on river conditions for this trip: weather, river levels, possible hazards.
- ▼ Plan a noon meal based on nineteenth century packet menus.
- ▼ Sing roustabout songs, listen to river music, tell “tall tales” of the river [see page 42].
- ▼ Stop for “wooding” at several intervals [see page 37].
- ▼ Take part in a steamboat race.

Decide What Will Work for You

Here are some basic issues to consider:

- ▼ How much classroom time do you want to devote to this? The actual “Steamboat Day” will be enhanced by setting aside preparation time in the weeks ahead. Plan to use social studies and language arts lessons—even math time—to incorporate exercises and activities and videotapes from the various sections of this book.
- ▼ Will each child come in costume? This will involve giving parents ideas of where to find pictures of period costumes so they can offer assistance.
- ▼ Will the program include a meal? This will also involve cooperation from parents willing to help in food preparation and serving.
- ▼ Will you transform the physical environment of your classroom? If so, you need to schedule time during art classes to create mock gingerbread trim, appropriate cargo items and period steamboat posters.
- ▼ Which of the additional activities in Section Three will dovetail with your plans?
- ▼ Which of the many resources in Section Four do you yourself wish to consult and which do you want to make available in your classroom?

Your Steamboat Day can be as modest or as ambitious as you wish. Remember, the first steamboats were small and simple. But year by year they grew bigger and fancier.



Betsy Ann under Captain Fred Way, Jr., c.1926

12 Announcing the Trip

An essential preparation for a Steamboat Day in your classroom is to announce officially your day-long trip on the river. Here are some specific activities to support that official announcement:

Name Your Packet

Have the class choose a name for your packet. Choose the name of one of the boats coming to Tall Stacks [see page 53 for a complete list], the name of your school, or something that has special meaning for the students.

Plot Your Course

Decide what specific trip your packet will run [Cincinnati to Louisville, Pittsburgh to Cincinnati, etc.]; the day and hour it will leave; and from where it will leave [Pittsburgh's Public Landing]. The chart on page 63 will be a useful resource.

Post a Broadside

Use the broadside on the opposite page as a model to create your own posters announcing the departure of your packet. Post these throughout the school, if the principal does not object.

Issue the Tickets

Use the sample tickets below as a model to make tickets for your trip. Remember, only passengers have to buy tickets—not crew. Ticket prices can be set at different levels. Passengers who cannot afford expensive tickets will have to help load wood onto the boat.

Tickets can be sent to special guests you wish to invite: your principal, parent-helpers. You can also send tickets to the local media as a way of enticing them to cover your Steamboat Day.



13 Building Your Boat

Large cities like Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and St. Louis as well as smaller towns like Jeffersonville, Indiana, all developed as major centers of steamboat manufacturing after 1817. By transforming your classroom into a steamboat, your students will continue that honorable tradition.

Look for Decorating Ideas

Packets came in all sizes. Some were fine, fancy, “floating wedding cakes.” Others were plain, even drab.

Imagine your classroom as the interior saloon of a packet. This space was usually divided into a ladies’ cabin and a gentlemen’s cabin. The ladies’ cabin of the **Great Republic**, pictured in the 1876 photo on the opposite page, can give you some ideas about decorations the students might make. See also the gentleman’s cabin pictured on page 45.

Here is the way two nineteenth century river travelers described the interior of the American packets they rode. Read these first-hand accounts to your students to help explain the photographs.

“About three fourths of its length in the forepart of the boat is called the gentleman’s cabin, but serves also as the dining saloon; in the rear—farthest removed from the boilers, and regarded, therefore, as the safest quarters—is the ladies’ cabin. The latter is usually fitted up more luxuriously than the men’s cabin, from which it is shut off by glass doors. Only those gentlemen who are acquaintances or friends of the ladies on board have entree to their cabin.”

—*Journal of Randolph Frederick Kurz, (1846-52)*

*The 260 foot long saloon of the **Great Republic** “is the prettiest thing I ever saw afloat, and far the tastiest thing I had seen since I landed in the United States. It is got up in a half Moresco half Gothic style, painted white and gold picked out with blue, and has a double row of pillars with fretted arches forming three aisles, of which the two side ones abut on the state rooms. Round the saloon are covered galleries; above is a tier of small apartments in which the officers and employees of the boat sleep, and above that, in the center, the tower from which the vessel is steered.”*

—*Greville John Chester, **Transatlantic Sketches** (1869)*

Decide What Fits Your Classroom

You can make mock gingerbread moldings. You can bring in a fancy table and chairs from the period—or just set an ordinary table with an elegant table cloth and a gas lamp. Be sure to reserve some space for freight. [See page 29.] All packets carried goods as well as passengers!



14 Loading the Freight

River packets carried goods as well as passengers. Make sure your classroom steamboat gives evidence of the freight aboard.

Examine Boat Manifests

The photo on the opposite page shows the **Senator Cordill** loaded with hundreds of chicken coops on every deck. Here are two firsthand accounts of the freight aboard a typical packet:

“1,000 head of chickens, 400 turkeys, 1,100 sheep, 180 hogs, 2,000 barrels of flour, 1,990 sacks of corn, 400 barrels of pork, besides two or three hundred bales of hemp and cotton and a load of fuel.”

—Charles Mackay, *Life and Liberty in America* (1859)

“We had chickens, eggs, calves, such as that on the boiler deck. They would have them tied all up and down the guard. Chickens, they had them up along the roof, up around where the pilot house was.”

—Leslie Souther, *roustabout* (1957 oral history)

Select Your Cargo

Students can create bales of hay, crates of soap or candles, chicken coops and even cows and pigs. And don't forget the stacks of firewood to feed the steam engines. [See page 14.]



15 Focusing on River People

The most important learning opportunity of a Steamboat Day experience is the chance for each student to learn about and recreate someone from the past. Resources throughout this book—descriptions, photos, oral history quotes—can help students get an idea of who nineteenth century river people were and what they did.

Choose a Character

Have each student assume a role to play on Steamboat Day. Each student should choose a name for his or her character. A made-up name invites the student to really become someone else for a day—and to take a step back into another time and place. Here is a sample classroom cast of steamboat characters:

- ▼ **A CAPTAIN.** The captain was responsible for the overall operation of the packet. He was especially concerned with the business aspects of the operation. Sometimes he was the owner of the boat. Sometimes he was also the pilot.

“Captain Tom Leathers of the Natchez was over six feet tall, a giant in stature, wore a ruffled shirt with a large cluster diamond pin and always dressed in Confederate gray. Woe be to him who referred to the late unpleasantness (Civil War), as Capt. Leathers did not recognize that the war was over.”

—G. L. Nourse, *Harbor Master of New Orleans* (1870)

“I have little time to play, or letter writing, or anything else but attending to the thousand demands upon my time that are necessary to keep the machine moving.”

—*Letter of Captain W.B. Miller, December 6, 1875*

- ▼ **A PILOT.** The pilot was responsible for steering the packet. He was also responsible for the overall safety of the passengers and crew and for anticipating—and avoiding—dangers such as ice, low water, sawyers, snags and fog.

“Working on the river as a pilot is 90 percent being bored to death, and 10 percent being scared to death.”

—*Captain Fred Way, Jr. (1988 oral history)*

Senator Cordill loaded with hundreds of chicken coops, 1926



“He has to keep his mind about two or three miles ahead of it so he'll know how he will be in a certain shape to get through a bridge, or a lock, or a narrow place in the river....A pilot is only as good as where he knows the river. He may be an excellent pilot from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati, but if he doesn't know the river below Cincinnati, he isn't too good of a pilot, until he learns it.”

—Captain Dana Young (1991 oral history)

- ▼ **TWO MATES.** The mates assisted the captain with many of the tasks aboard the packet, including supervising the deckhands.
- ▼ **TWO ENGINEERS.** The engineers were responsible for tending the steam engines and boilers. This included supervising the loading of fuel, watching for leaks in the boilers and making sure steam pressure was maintained within safe limits. Engineers were also responsible for repairing the engines and boilers when breakdowns occurred.
- ▼ **A STEWARD AND A COOK.** The steward was responsible for buying all the food for the passengers and crew. The cook was responsible for preparing the meals. On smaller boats this could be the same person. These were the two jobs women could get on a packet.

“To me, the cook's the most important person on the boat. Because, if you don't have a good cook, you have crew trouble right quick.”

—Captain Dana Young (1991 oral history)

“It paid to hire a fat cook. I never saw a lean cook that was worth anything.”

—Captain Fred Way, Jr. (1988 oral history)

- ▼ **MANY ROUSTABOUTS, OR DECKHANDS.** Packets carried **heavy** freight. A hogshead (barrel) of tobacco weighed 800 to 1,200 pounds. A bale of hay weighed about 110 pounds. Manufactured goods—such as a wooden crate full of soap or candles from P&G, or nails from the Eagle Foundry—could weigh 25 to 100 pounds.



The hard, often back-breaking work of loading and unloading this freight fell to the roustabout, often called a rouster. Rousters were expected to be able to carry their own weight in cargo. Most roustabouts were African-Americans. Since rousters were usually known only by their nicknames, the captain—or even other rousters—could rarely give a roustabout’s full name.

Two old roustabouts, Bee Hines and Leslie Souther, recalled some of these nicknames in a 1957 oral history interview: Chief, Pride, Doll Eyes, Black Mouth, Red Shirt, Tar Eye, Shorty, Bees, Bad Eye, Big Devil, Little Devil. Leslie Souther’s nickname was “hog,” short for the “original hogshead.” Bee Hine’s nickname was “Been Everywhere.” The life of the roustabout was hard, as Souther and Hines described.

“All freight was handled by hand. We carried freight on shoulders, we carried freight in hands, we rolled barrels, we carried boxes.”

—Leslie Souther (1957 oral history)

“Two men would lift it up on your shoulder. All you had to do was take it to the boat, and two fellas would take it off... And any time that the boat landed, they called all hands, day or night, and we went to work; as long as the freight lasted we went to work. We have worked as high as 10 to 12 hours at one landing.”

—Bee Hines (1957 oral history)

“Well, at that time you had no beds. We’d sleep on freight piles, such as that. We slept underneath the boilers in cold weather, on the guards of the boat and the head of the boat in the hot weather.”

—Bee Hines (1957 oral history)

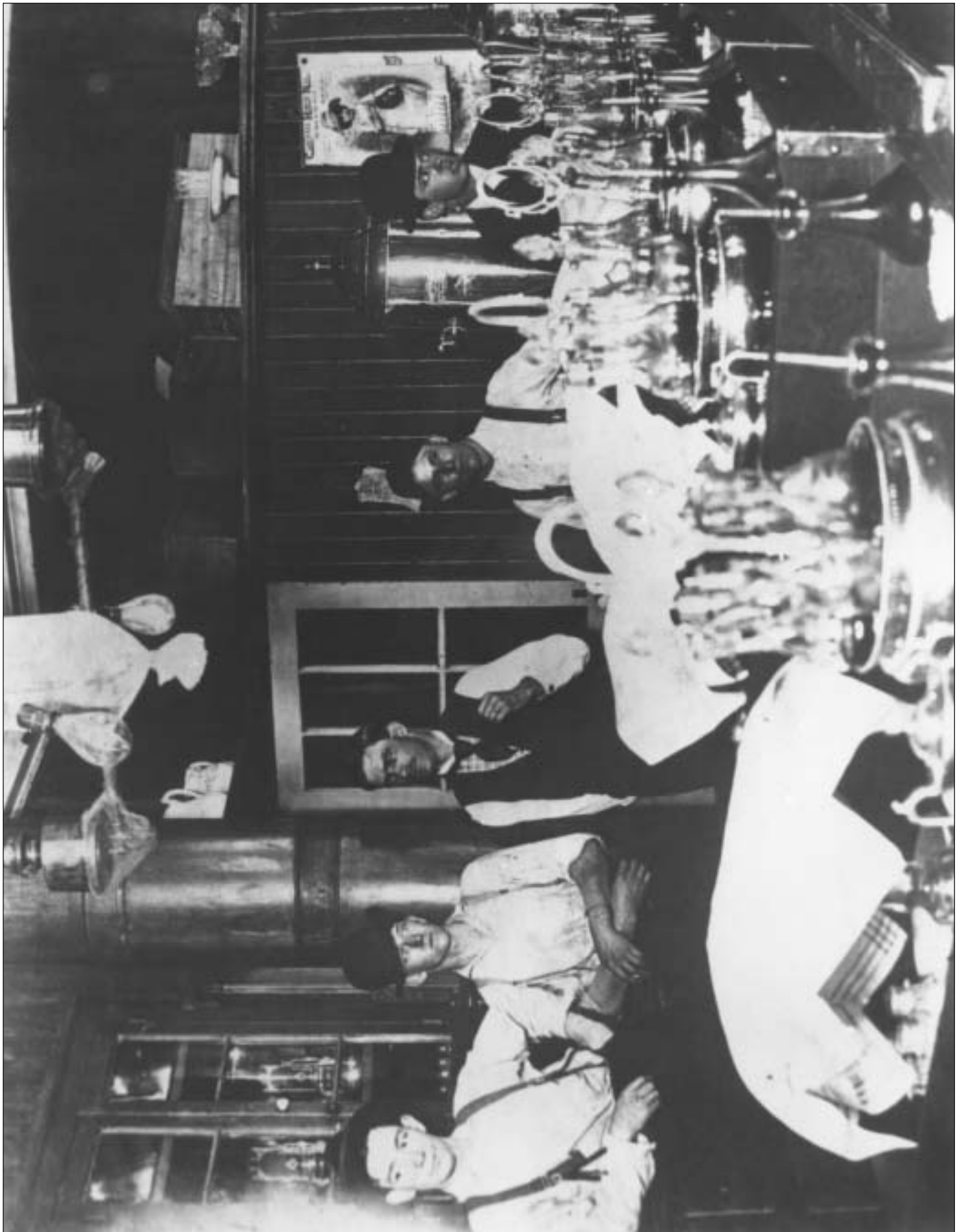
“We paid them a dollar a day. They signed a slip when they got on there... if they could sign... that they agreed to work 24 hours a day.”

—Captain Fred Way, Jr. (1988 oral history)

“Fifty cents a day and board to sleep under the boilers on the boat. Eating out of a tin pan what was left on the table.”

—Captain John Beatty (1957 oral history)

Captain Tony Meldahl, piloting the **Queen City**, c.1906



- ▼ **MANY PASSENGERS.** Many different people traveled by packet in the nineteenth century. Those who could afford it slept in rooms named after the states of the union. Thus the term “state rooms.” Poor farmers, on the other hand, could buy cheaper tickets. They slept on deck and had to help load wood onto the boat [“wooding”] every five or six hours.

Each passenger should assume a specific identity—a farmer returning from selling his corn crop in New Orleans; a shop owner from Cincinnati going to restock his particular wares in New Orleans; an immigrant from Ireland or Germany heading to meet cousins who came to America five years earlier; a politician heading home after a session of Congress.

“The deck, as is usual, was occupied by the Kentucky flat-boat men, returning from New Orleans, after have disposed of their boat and cargo which they had conveyed thither... A most disorderly set of persons, constantly gambling and wrangling, very seldom sober...”

—Frances Trollope

“When the boat stopped to take on wood, the deck passengers ran, or rather sprang and vaulted over each other's heads to the shore, whence they all assisted in carrying wood to supply the steam engine. The performance of this duty being a stipulated part of the payment of their passage.”

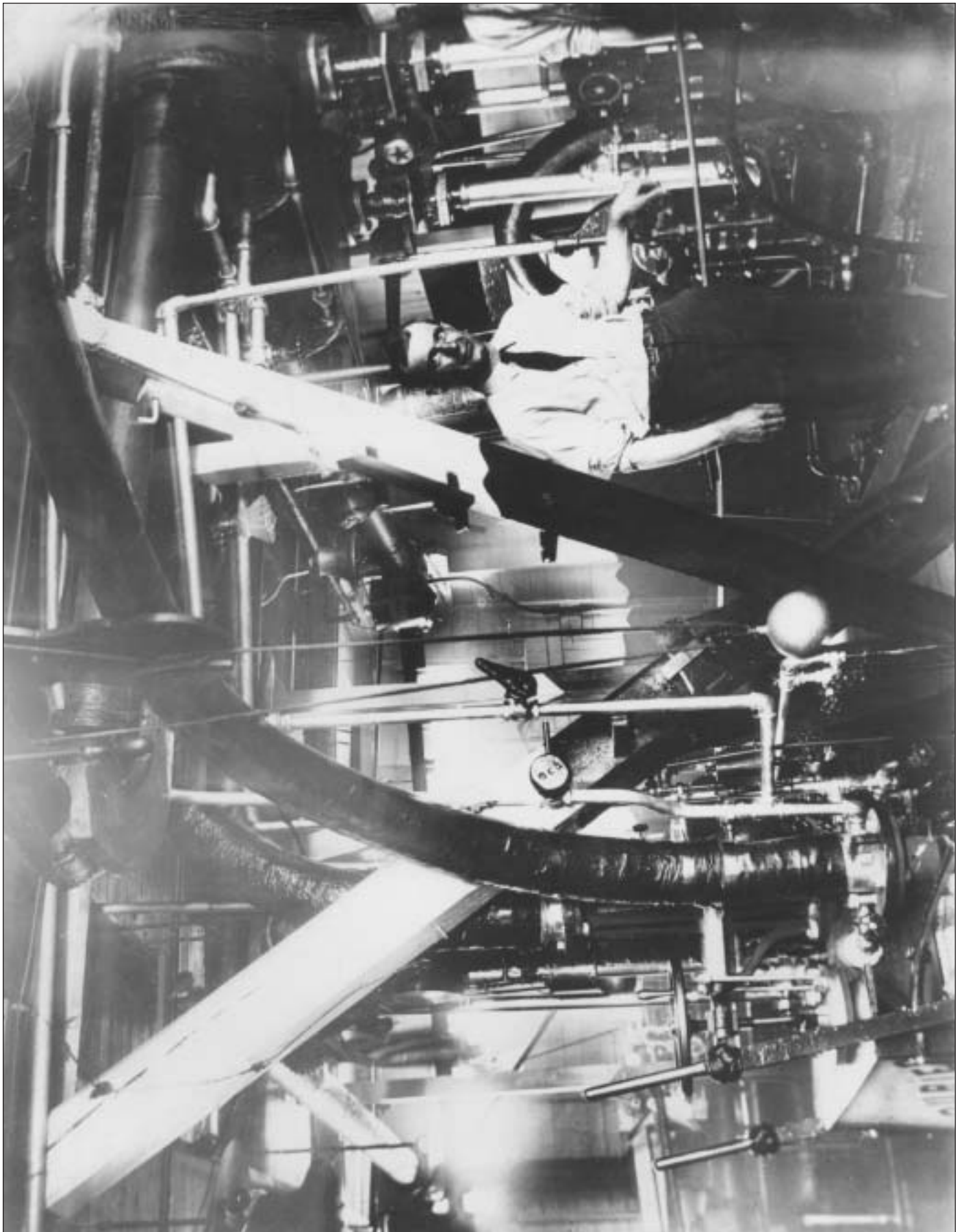
—Frances Trollope

Keep a Diary

Once each student has chosen a character to recreate, they should be assigned to keep a diary for a week describing their character's experiences—in the first person—while traveling on a packet. Here are some issues to address:

- ▼ What did he see along the shore?
- ▼ How did she react to the vast tracks of wilderness, the small towns, the big cities?
- ▼ What type of people did he meet? How did he react to them?
- ▼ What exciting things occurred along the way? [Getting stuck on a sandbar during low water; hitting a snag; getting lost in the fog.]
- ▼ What ports were visited along the way?
- ▼ Did he help with “wooding”?
- ▼ How were the long hours spent on board. [Remind students that television, radio, and portable tape players did not exist.]

Stewards and cooks in the pantry of the **City of Louisville**, c.1898



Read the following passage from the 1838 diary of John Baker during a trip from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati:

“At 7 we left the Wharf & ploughed down the Ohio at the Rate of 12 miles per hour. Contrary to my expectation, I felt no fear whatever. We had one of the oldest and most experienced Captains, the Best Pilot and Engineer, said to be on the River.

*“[Monday] 2 O'clock I was awakened by the Stopping of the Engine. got up to enquire the cause & was told it was on account of the Fog on the River being so dense the Pilot could not see how to steer. She was hauled in near shore and made fast to a tree until 5 A.M. when she got under way... came up with Steamboat **Munroe** which left Pittsburgh 8 hours before us. We ran her a race and left her far behind, at 12 we dined, spent the afternoon in Reading & Sleeping.”*

Suggest students illustrate their journals with pictures of the packet, of the captain or of the other passengers.





16 Recreating River Sounds

Make sure your Steamboat Day is filled with actual sounds of the river. These sounds include the work songs of the roustabouts, the sounds of distinctive steamboat whistles, and the period music that passengers may have sung or hummed. Some of the fancier boats had musicians aboard to entertain the guests with live music.

Sing a Real Roustabout Song

The roustabouts not only did the heavy work, they created much of the music of the river. Many river songs were work songs intended to provide a rhythm for rouster labors.

Most roustabout songs were “just spur of the moment things,” as retired musician James Ault recalls. These songs were never formally written down or recorded. But some have survived in the memories of rivermen, and others have been collected and saved by folklorists.

Create Your Own Steamboat Song

The following two songs were collected by anthropologist Mary Wheeler in the 1930s. The songs were arranged by W.J. Reddick. A record of Conrad Thibault performing these songs exists.

The lyrics are given below. Use them as a model to create a song about your own packet. Substitute the specifics about your boat and crew, and make up—or find—a melody to fit.

• • • • SONG ONE

Refrain:

“John Gilbert is de boat,
Di-de oh, di-de oh
John Gilbert is de boat,
Di-de oh, di-de oh
Running in the Cincinatuh trade”

Verses:

“You see dat boat a-comin’,
She’s comin’ roun’ de ben’—
an’ whin she gits in,
She’ll be loaded down a-gin
“Mister Kahn wuz de head clerk,
Cap’n Duncan wuz de cap’n
Billy Evitt wuz de head mate
Running’ in de Cincinatuh trade.”

• • • • •
“This old job is sure hard, but it’s got to be done.”
—James Ault (oral history)

• • • • •
“Come up to me
Stick your head out along
Tell me what shoulder you want it on.”
—Horace Lyle (oral history)



• • • •
SONG TWO

Refrain:

“I’m wukkin’ my way back home,
I’m wukkin’ my way back home,
I’m wukkin’ my way back home, baby
I’m wukkin’ my way back home.”

Verses:

“Oh Fireman, keep her rollin’ fo’ me—
Le’s make it Memphis, Tennessee;
Fo’ my back is tired,
An’ my shoulders are getting sore!”

“Timber don’ git too heavy fo’ me.
An’ sacks too heavy to stack;
All dat I craves fo’ many a long day
Is yo’ lovin’ whin I git back.”

“Now Paduchah’s layin’ roun’ de ben’
Now Paduchah’s layin’ roun’ de ben’
Cap’n Don’ Whistle—Jes’ ring yo’ bell
Fo’ my woman’ll be standin’ right there.

“Hm—m—m

Hm—m—m

I’m wukkin’ my way back home, baby
I’m wukkin’ my way back home.”

Explore Other River Sounds

See Section Four for recorded music of the period. Note the album featuring 38 distinctive steamboat whistles! There are also several music activities in Section Three, including a Tall Stacks Rap.

17 Enjoying Packet Fare

Review Packet Menus

The two menus pictured on pages 46 and 47 feature food that was typical of that served on nineteenth century packets. Here are some firsthand accounts of dining on the river:

As soon as the meal is ready to be served, the steward informs the captain, who “goes to the ladies saloon and invites them to the table. Then the steward rings the bell. Upon that announcement, the unmarried men may go in and wait, standing as patient as sheep, until the ladies, or perhaps only one lady, finishes her toilette, sweeps to the table on the arm of her cavalier or her husband, and sits down; then, and not until then, the remainder of the gentlemen take their seats.”

—*Journal of Randolph Frederick Kurz, (1846-52)*

“Usually a passenger would sit down and have five side dishes besides his meat. Ice cream and cake were served as dessert.” “We’d have mash potatoes and string beans, and corn on the cob. It was just plain cooking, not anything fancy.”

—*Mack Davis, cook on the **Betsy Ann** (1957 oral history)*

“At each (meal) there are a great many small dishes and plates upon the table, and very little in them; so that although there is every appearance of a mighty ‘spread,’ there is seldom really more than a joint.”

—*Charles Dickens, **American Notes for General Circulation** (1848)*

Establish Your Bill of Fare

Your food can be as simple or as elegant as you like. Remember, you can always dress up simple twentieth century fare with nineteenth century names!

Passengers eating aboard the **Courier**, c.1900 (p. 45)

Handwritten dinner menu from the **Robert J. Ward** for March 12, 1853 (p. 46)

Breakfast Bill of Fare from **Robert E. Lee**, c.1870 (p. 47)



BREAKFAST

Bill of Fare

OF THE

New Orleans and Vicksburg Steamer

ROBERT E. LEE,

J. W. CANNON, - - Master.

J. F. SMITH and A. McVAY, Clerks.

Hours for Meals:

Breakfast, 7½ to 10 o'clock; Dinner, at 2 o'clock; Tea, at 6 o'clock.

BROILED.

Beef-steak Plain	Ham Plain	Ham on Coals
Beef-steak with Potatoes		Mutton Chops
Beef-steak with Onions		Perk Chops
Beefsteak with Mushrooms		

FRIED.

Onions	Tripe	Codfish Balls	Hominy	Potatoes
Brains	Calf's Liver	Breakfast Bacon		Sausage

STEWED.

Mutton	Potatoes	Kidney
--------	----------	--------

MISCELLANEOUS.

Veal Cutlets, Bread Crumbed	Jambolaya	Fricassee of Tripe
Boiled Small Hominy		Hashed Meat

Havana Coffee, Chocolate, Green and Black Tea, Milk, Syrup.

BREADS, Etc.

Crackers Assorted	Sallie Linn	Muffins	Dry Toast
White Rolls	French Rolls	Corn Bread	Milk Toast
Buckwheat Cakes			

Magic Press Print, 77 Magazine St., N. O.

Section Three

Additional Activities

18 Ohio River Sweep

Related Subject Area:

Environmental Studies/Science

Materials Needed:

gloves

Join one of the largest cleanup events in the United States! The Ohio River has 1,962 miles of shoreline that stretches through six states. Over the last 20 years water quality of the Ohio River has steadily improved. That has meant more recreational use on and along the river, which, in turn, has resulted in more litter along the riverbanks. Every year since 1989 volunteers have worked together one Saturday each June to remove that trash. In 1995 over 19,000 volunteers collected more than 14,000 tons of debris.

The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission [ORSANCO], in partnership with Ashland Inc. coordinates the annual Ohio River Sweep. The Sweep has cleanup sites in each of the 72 counties that border the Ohio. If you would like more information about the next Sweep and how to participate, call ORSANCO toll free at 1-800-359-3977.

Anyone under 18 years old must have parental permission. To make sure that the Ohio River Sweep is both safe and fun, ORSANCO recommends the following safety tips:

- ▼ Watch where you walk to avoid broken glass, rusty nails, and poison ivy
- ▼ Always wear gloves
- ▼ Never place yourself in a dangerous situation such as trying to get trash floating in the river
- ▼ Don't get in the water
- ▼ Stay away from thick brushy areas
- ▼ Avoid high cliffs
- ▼ Watch for traffic in pull over areas along the side of the road.

19 Tall Tales

Related Subject Area:

language arts and creative writing

Materials Needed:

pencil and paper; art supplies

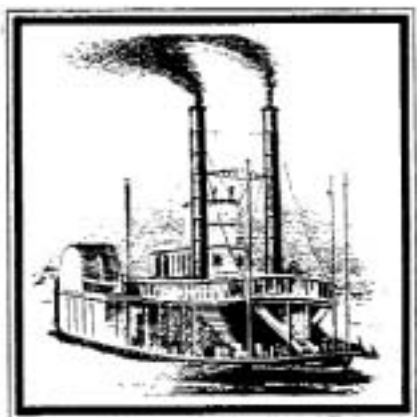
River people love to tell stories. Many are passed down as part of the oral tradition. “**The Story of the Katie Prather**” is one such “tall tale.” It was recounted by J. Emory Edgington in an oral history interview on July 16, 1957. Read the story to your class. The story begins as the packet **Katie Prather** is tied up in Buck Creek to take on a load of turkeys.

The Story of the Katie Prather

Here come the turkeys down to the boat. They filled her up downstairs and began taking them up to the roof. Captain George was afraid they would fly away, so he took staples and a hammer and drove a staple down between their toes and fastened each one so it wouldn't fly away.

The boys got all the turkeys on but one big old gobbler. He was a great big gobbler, too. One of the boys began nailing him down but swung the hammer a little bit too hard and drove the staple a little bit too far in. The hammer went down and hit the old gobbler.

The old gobbler made a gobble noise, raised his wings and flew. All those turkeys raised their wings and flew up in the air. That was the last of the **Katie Prather**.



Ask students to:

- ▼ Draw a picture of the **Katie Prather**
- ▼ Write a tall tale of the river.

20 Packets Letters

Related Subject Area:

social studies and language arts

Materials Needed:

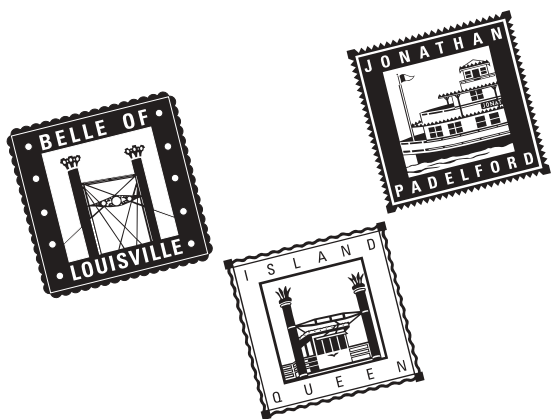
encyclopedias, reference books about American history, resources in this book, quills or fountain pens, parchment-type paper

Nineteenth-century Americans were letter-writers. They had no telephones for instant communication. People aboard steamboats, from the captain to the deck passengers—were busy writing letters to loved ones and business associates. Have each student assume the role of a person connected with riverboats. The characters can be actual historical figures or fictional ones. From inside this assumed role, instruct each student to write a first-person letter to someone else.

Here are some possible correspondents

- ▼ A riverboat captain and his wife.
- ▼ A cabin boy and his mother or father.
- ▼ A riverboat passenger and his/her business partner.
- ▼ A young teacher and his/her former teacher.
- ▼ A preacher and his mother or father.
- ▼ A child who has recently moved to an Ohio River town and his/her friend back East.
- ▼ A slave trader and a plantation owner.
- ▼ A German or Irish immigrant and his mother or father in Europe.

Excerpts of actual nineteenth century riverboat letters can be seen on page 2 [from a farm wife to her husband] and page 10&11 [from a packet captain to his children].



21 Tall Stacks Quilt

Related Subject Area:

art

Materials Needed:

8" paper squares, construction paper, markers, crayons, paint, ink

Have students work together to develop a Tall Stacks quilt. Assign each student responsibility for one square, but work together to coordinate themes and design.

22 Riverboat Models

Related Subject Areas:

art and history

Materials Needed:

craft sticks, glue, toothpicks, legos, balsa wood, scissors

Use the photos of riverboats scattered throughout this book as a reference. Have each student make a simple model of a river packet.

23 Tall Stacks Scrapbook/Bulletin Board

Related Subject Area:

current events

Materials Needed:

paper, glue, scissors, binder [optional]

Local newspapers will be filled with information about Tall Stacks and all the activities that surround it. Have each student look for articles, photos and ads in the daily papers. These can be pasted in a scrapbook or used to decorate the classroom bulletin board.



24 Tall Stacks Photo Essay

Related Subject Area:

art and current events

Materials Needed:

camera, film, posterboard

Discuss the power of a single visual image and how a group of photos can be used to tell a story that does not depend on words.

Ask students to:

- ▼ Take photos of the Tall Stacks event and create a display of those photos for presentation to the entire class.
- ▼ Take photos of your classroom Steamboat Day for your school archives or a community newspaper.



25 Commemorative Postage Stamps

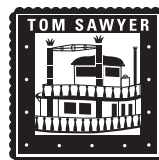
Related Subject Area:

art

Materials Needed:

8.5"x11" paper, markers, crayons

Ask students to use images from this book and the popular press as resources to design and draw a commemorative postage stamp for Tall Stacks.



26 Steamboat Logo or Flag

Related Subject Area:

art and history

Materials Needed:

12"x18" construction paper, markers or crayons, scissors, glue

Break the class into small groups. Have each group choose one of the boats coming to Tall Stacks—or make up a name for a pretend boat. Ask students to design a flag—or a simple logo--to go with the name.

Boats coming to Tall Stacks:

American Queen	Johnathan Padelford
Anson Northrop	Majestic
Belle of Louisville	Memphis Queen III
Celebration Belle	Mississippi Queen
Colonel	Music City Queen
Creole Queen	River Queen
Delta Queen	Spirit of Cincinnati
Dottie G	Spirit of Jefferson
Harriet Bishop	Tom Sawyer
Island Queen	

Each of these boats has an official seal. Some of these seals can be found throughout this book as illustration.

Making a flag:

- ▼ Fold a 12"x18" piece of paper in fourths.
- ▼ Cut away the lower right rectangle.
- ▼ Beginning at the left side, roll to center to make a stick for the flag. Tape.
- ▼ Decorate the flag portion with cut-out designs, markers, etc.



27 Steamboat Mosaics

Related Subject Area:

art and history

Materials Needed:

construction paper, scissors, glue, pictures of mosaics on display at the airport and in the rotunda at Cincinnati's Museum Center, steamboat photos from this book

Show students pictures of the mosaics on display at the airport and those still in The Museum Center. Discuss the basic shape and features of a "packet," the correct name for the type of steamboats that ran on America's rivers. See page 8 for information about the distinctive features of a packet.

How to make a simple mosaic:

- ▼ Make a simple drawing.
- ▼ Cut or tear various colors of construction paper into small pieces.
- ▼ Glue pieces of paper onto the drawing leaving a slight space between pieces.



28 River Music

Related Subject Area:

music and dance

Materials Needed:

Orff instruments, melody bells, recorders; musical selections such as: “Down the River” [Allyn and Bacon’s **This is Music**, Book 3], “Floating Down the River” [Silver Burdett, 1981 edition/Book 1], “Waiting for the Robert E. Lee” [Jenson Publications], or “Paddle Wheeler” from **Steamboatin’** [Jenson Publications]

“Down the River” and “Floating Down the River” are both about the Ohio River. Both lend themselves to chord accompaniment on Orff instruments or melody bells. Both also can be danced to.

Playing River Music

The adaptation below could be used with any river song:

- ▼ Teach the song “Down the River.”
- ▼ In the key of B flat, add melody instruments on the chorus.
- ▼ Play F, G and A on the “downs,” and B flat on “go.”
- ▼ Play chords. Use I, IV and V chords on either Orff instruments or melody bells. Assigning one set of children to each chord is easiest. Later, let them play all three.

Dancing River Music

Teach a dance for “Down the River.” Keep it simple. For example:

- ▼ For the 16-beat verse: From a longways set [two lines of children facing a partner]. Walk forward toward the partner three steps and clap both hands with partner. Walk backward three steps to place and clap own hands. Walk forward to partner and do a right elbow swing. Return to place.
- ▼ For the 16-beat chorus: Head couple joins hands and gallops to other end of lines. Second couple does the same. [The third couple now becomes the new head couple for the second verse.]
- ▼ Teach the dance movements for “Floating Down the River” from the Teacher’s Edition of Silver Burdett, Grade 1 [1981]. This is also a good song for studying form [AB], contrast and tempo [fast and slow].

29 Tall Stacks Song

Related Subject Area:

music

Materials Needed:

Orff instruments, melody bells, recorders, etc.

Have students compose a musical piece about the Ohio River. You can have students write both lyrics and music. Or you can ask students to write lyrics to music you write for their Orff instruments.

A painting or photograph could be presented for inspiration. Or you might give students some title suggestions such as “Rollin’ Down the Ohio” or “Stars Over the Ohio.”



30 Tall Stacks Poetry

Related Subject Area:

English and history

Materials Needed:

worksheet, paper and writing materials

Create a free-verse poem celebrating Tall Stacks using the following lexicon and guidelines.

Lexicon:

celebration	a	river
in	stacks	meet
proud	autumn	through
against	sky	sail
tall	silhouettes	pride
graceful	crowds	Cincinnati
delight	the	cheer

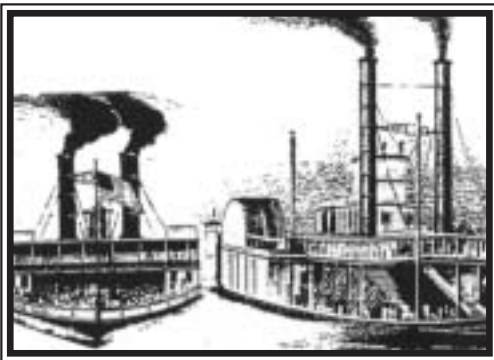
Guidelines:

- ▼ You may use a word more than once.
- ▼ You may use any form of the given word.
- ▼ You need not use all the given words.
- ▼ You may add up to three of your own words.

Sample poems:

Tall Stacks
silhouetted against the sky
Autumnal splendor
Graceful monuments
Crowds celebrate
A river delight!

Silhouetted against the autumnal sky
Graceful ships sail mellifluously through the river
delighting and exciting the crowds.



31 Boat Race

Related Subject Area:

social studies, art, science

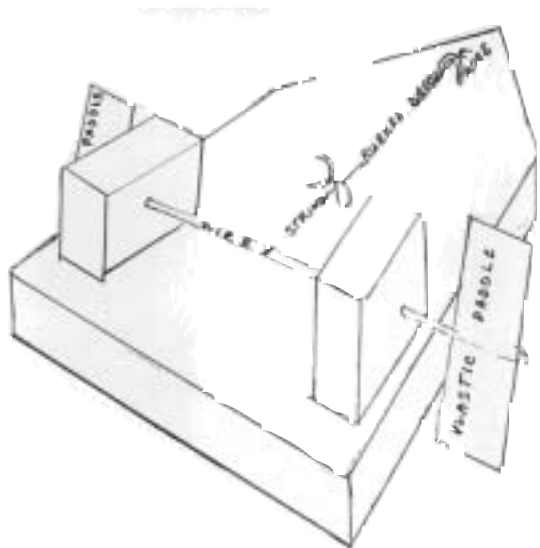
Materials Needed:

balsa wood, wire, glue, rubber bands, string, plastic milk jugs; two 6' lengths of rain gutter, capped at each end and filled with water

After each child constructs a paddle boat following the instructions below, race class boats in the rain gutters. After each child has a chance to compete, stop and explore what makes some boats go faster and farther. Make some adjustments to the length of the rubber bands, strings and size of the paddles. What conclusions can you draw?

How to make a paddle boat:

- ▼ Make a wide balsa wood boat shape. [See the diagram below] Cut a short length of strong wire and bend it into a “U” shape with a pair of pliers. With a hammer, tap the wire into the bow of the boat.
- ▼ Cut two small blocks of wood and drill a whole through each piece. Attach these to each side of the boat using balsa cement.
- ▼ Cut another length of strong wire slightly longer than the width of the boat. Push this wire through the holes in the balsa blocks.
- ▼ Cut out two paddle wheels from a plastic milk jug. Attach these to the end of the wire and bend the wire around to hold them firmly.
- ▼ Cut a short length of rubber band. Tie a piece of string to the rubber band. Tie the rubber band to the “U” shaped wire and tie the string to the paddle wire. Turn the paddle wire so that the string twists around it, stretching the rubber band.
- ▼ Place the paddle boat in the water.



32 River Wordsearch

Find the following words hidden in the puzzle below.

If you need assistance, see the key on page 64.

Captain

Stacks

Riverboat

OhioRiver

Cincinnati

Steam

RobertFulton

Paddle

DeltaQueen

Passengers

S F O J M Y U P O A I D E R G
L R M N Q L S J Y Y E B I A F
P U E Z O F P G E L X V F C N
P E F G I T D A T F E M T J C
O Q O F N H L A D R G L T I Q
J I A S E E Q U B D S C R H J
S T T U T U S O F F L E O N F
C A I D E O A S O T V E T V E
Y N S E D T L E A I R N O T I
N N N T A M E W R P I E Q P V
V I D A A Z A O O A X H B U N
F C A T F C I E T K V L F O O
A N D N O H K P T O G D G I R
N I T D O N A S U S D A G S C
A C T C K C V J G I J C L X I

33 Steamboat Wordsearch

Don't miss the boats! Find the names of the following Tall Stacks in the puzzle below. If you need assistance, see the key on page 64.

Anson Northrup
 Becky Thatcher
 Belle of StLouis
 Bonnie Belle
 Delta Queen
 Island Queen
 Southern Belle

Josiah Snelling
 Majestic
 Mississippi Queen
 P.A. Denny
 Quad City Queen
 Queen of Hearts

O C Y E O W L J Z T K U A W X F J M H R
 J E C M G Z R T S N D T W Q I X Y J S H
 P O A S W K N E E X K E U R S H J I W L
 Q Y E G I T O A H X N E L D T O K G T R
 O I B L J U U Q F C E X L T S J M B N G
 B Y G O L B O M F N T D Z I A C C E O U
 N I M V W E O L O P P A A G I Q E Q Y C
 Y K S I P P B F T Y B H H T V U U Q V A
 N Y K L W P H N E S S G S T Q X U E N X
 N B J K A E A C R N F E I I Y A O S E Y
 E B O M A N Z F E E J O P F D K O J Z N
 D S O R S F D L M A H P E C Y N C U X X
 A N T N Z X L Q M O I T I L N U L E Q A
 P S X H N I C A U S V T U O L R Q K B Z
 T C L W N I G C S E Y D R O B E Y N M H
 U P U G C Q E I S Q E T Q G S F B W U C
 C H M I H C S B U B H N V S Q M A E N N
 C L K B C S S E E R T M K G Z N K F Q G
 L V C I I A E T U L J O J U E Q A S G C
 S K Y M T N T P J B L B L B W V Q G O M

34 Math Steamboat

Related Subject Area:

math

Materials Needed:

pencil and crayons

Solve the multiplication problems on the picture on page 62.

Then color the space appropriately. If the product is:

- ▼ 16—color the area white
- ▼ 18—color the area blue
- ▼ 24—color the area red



35 River Statistics

Related Subject Areas

math and geography

Materials Needed:

classroom map of the United States

The Ohio River twists and turns for 981 miles between Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Cairo, Illinois. Along its course it passes hundreds of towns and cities in six states. Below is a list of selected river towns and their distance in miles from Pittsburgh.

Write the cities and distances on the blackboard, ask students to:

Find these cities on the map:

Pittsburgh, PA	0	Wheeling, WV	89
Marietta, OH	171	Huntington, WV	310
Portsmouth, OH	361	Maysville, KY	407
Cincinnati, OH	468	Madison, IN	560
Louisville, KY	604	Owensboro, KY	753
Evansville, IN	794	Paducah, KY	933
Cairo, IL.	981		

Calculate the distance, the time and the cost of the following trips:

Pittsburgh to Cincinnati
Cincinnati to Huntington
Cincinnati to Louisville
Evansville to Cincinnati
Pittsburgh to Evansville
Louisville to Wheeling
Pittsburgh to Paducah

In the 1840s a packet could average approximately 8 miles per hour going downstream and 4 miles per hour going upstream. (Remember, packets frequently stopped to pick up or drop off passengers and freight. And about every six hours they had to stop to take on a load of wood.) Each day a passenger spent on a steamboat cost approximately \$3.25.

• • • • •
Key for River Wordsearch:

S	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	D	.	R	.
.	R	.	N	.	.	.	.	.	E	.	I	.	.
.	.	E	.	O	.	P	.	.	L	.	V	.	.
.	.	.	G	.	T	.	A	T	.	E	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	N	.	L	A	D	R	.	.	.	.
.	I	.	.	.	E	Q	U	B	D	.	.	R	.
.	T	.	.	.	U	S	O	F	.	L	E	.	.
.	A	.	.	E	.	A	S	.	T	V	E	.	.
.	N	S	E	.	T	.	.	A	I	R	N	.	.
.	N	N	T	.	M	.	.	R	P	I	E	.	.
.	I	.	.	A	.	A	O	.	A	.	.	B	.
.	C	.	.	.	C	I	E	T	.	.	.	.	O
.	N	.	.	.	H	K	P	T	.	.	.	.	R
.	I	.	.	O	.	A	S	.	S	.	.	.	.
.	C	.	.	.	C	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

• • • • •
Key for Steamboat Wordsearch:

.
.	.	.	.	R	.	.	.	D	.	.	Q	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	S	.	.	E	.	.	E	U	.	.	J	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
.	E	.	I	.	.	H	.	E	L	.	.	O	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	L	.	U	.	.	C	E	.	.	T	S	.	.	N	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	L	.	O	.	.	N	T	.	.	I	A	C	.	E	.	.	.	.
.	I	.	.	E	.	L	O	.	.	A	A	.	I	Q	E	.	.	.	.	.
Y	.	S	.	.	B	F	T	.	.	H	H	T	.	U	U	Q	.	A	.	.
N	.	.	L	.	.	H	N	.	S	S	.	S	T	Q	.	U	E	N	.	.
N	.	.	.	A	E	.	.	R	N	F	E	.	I	Y	A	.	S	E	.	.
E	B	.	.	A	N	.	.	E	E	J	O	P	.	D	K	O	.	.	N	.
D	.	O	R	.	.	D	L	.	A	H	P	E	C	.	N	C	.	.	.	.
A	.	T	N	.	.	L	Q	N	.	I	T	I	L	N	.	.	E	.	.	.
P	S	.	.	N	I	.	.	U	S	.	T	U	O	L	.	.	B	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	N	I	.	.	S	E	Y	.	R	O	.	E	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	G	.	.	E	I	.	Q	E	T	.	.	S	.	B	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	.	S	B	U	.	H	N	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	.	S	.	E	E	R	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	.	I	.	E	.	U	L	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	H	.	N	.	P	.	.	L	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

Section Four

Annotated Resources

A wealth of resources exist for those interested in developing a more in-depth knowledge of the history of America's rivers and steamboats. This section includes:

- ▼ books for teachers [and older students],
- ▼ books for children,
- ▼ video programs, phonograph records and audio-cassettes for use in the classroom,
- ▼ museum/exhibition facilities related to America's rivers, steamboats and the people who were shaped by America's river.

The materials cited are available through many public libraries.

▼ Books for Teachers

Banfield, Carolyn E., and Cauffield, Joyce, eds. *The River Book: Cincinnati and the Ohio*. Cincinnati: The Program for Cincinnati, 1981.

.....

Bates, Alan L. *The Western Rivers Steamboat Cyclopedium*. Leonia, N.J.: Hustle Press, 1968.

.....

Gandy, Joan and Thomas. *The Mississippi Steamboat Era in Historic Photographs*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1987.

[This publication draws on hundreds of turn-of-the-century photographs taken by Henry Noonan in Natchez, Mississippi. These images provide a rich level of detail about the lives of the people who depended on the river.]

.....

Hubbard, Harlan. *Shantyboat: A River Way of Life*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1977.

[An account by artist Harlan and Anna Hubbard of a seven year voyage down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers aboard a shantyboat.]

.....

Hunter, Louis C. *Steamboats on the Western Waters: An Economic and Technological History*. New York: Dover Publications, 1993.



Samuel, Ray, et. al. *Tales of the Mississippi*. New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1955.
[This book is filled with black and white illustrations and information about flatboating and steamboating on the inland waters in the 19th century.]



Twain, Mark. *Life on the Mississippi*. New York. Random House, Inc., 1994.



Way, Frederick, Jr. *Log of the Betsy Ann*. New York: R. M. McBride, 1933.
[The words of Captain Fred Way, Jr., and the photos of Paul Briol provide a special insight into life and work aboard an Ohio River packet in the 1920s.]



Way, Frederick, Jr. *Way's Packet Directory, 1848-1983*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1983.
[For the serious student of packet boats this is an essential reference tool. Captain Way was a leading expert on the steamboats of America. This book provides brief histories about each steamboat that worked the inland rivers.]



Wayman, Norbury L. *Life on the River*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1971.
[This book is filled with more than 900 black-and-white and color illustrations about the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, flatboats, steamboats and river communities.]



▼ **Books for Students**

Andrist, Ralph K. *Steamboats on the Mississippi*. New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1962.
[As part of the American Heritage Junior Library, this fully illustrated book is the perfect reference tool for younger readers who want to know more about steamboats.]



Fichter, George. *The First Steamboat Down the Mississippi*. Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1989.

[A fictional account of the trip in 1811 of the **New Orleans** from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. Includes its arrival in Cincinnati.]

• • • • •
Hartford, John. *Steamboat in a Cornfield*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1986.

[Using historic photos, Bluegrass singer John Hartford tells the amazing, but true, story of the time in 1910 when the packet **Virginia** was stranded high and dry in a cornfield for almost a year.]

• • • • •
Kellogg, Steven. *Mike Fink: Tall Tales Retold and Illustrated*. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1992.

• • • • •
Sanders, Scott Russell. *Here Comes the Mystery Man*. New York: Bradbury Press, 1993.

• • • • •
Stein, Conrad R. *The Story of Mississippi Steamboats*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1987.

• • • • •
Zeck, Pam and Gerry. *Mississippi Sternwheelers*. Minneapolis: Corolrhuda Books, Inc., 1982.

[Besides providing some background about Ohio and Mississippi packets, the Zecks focus on the **Johnathan Padelford**, one of the boats participating in Tall Stacks.]

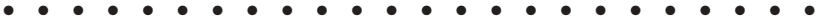
• • • • •
Videocassettes

Banjoes, Fiddles and Riverboats: John Hartford and the General Jackson. 1991. 45 minutes. Produced by Opryland, U.S.A.

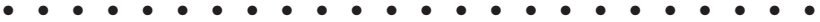
• • • • •
Beautiful Ohio: Rediscovering the Ohio River. 1991. 59 minutes. Sponsored by the Greater Cincinnati Tall Stacks Commission and produced by Dorothy Weil and Jane Goetzman.



Francis Joseph Reitz Home
224 S.E. 1st Street
PO Box 2478
Evansville, IN 47714
(812) 476-4218



Falls of the Ohio State Park
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
914 East Main Street
New Albany, IN 47150
(812) 280-9970
[An interpretive center focusing on one of the great geology
and paleontology sites in America.]



Hillforest Mansion
Main Street
Aurora, IN 47001
(812) 926-0087
[The grand home of a prominent southern Indiana family
who owned packets and depended on the river to transport
their goods.]



Historic Madison, Inc.
(multiple sites)
500 West Street
Madison, IN 47250
(812) 265-2967
[Historic Madison has restored and opened several homes
connected to the life of this river town that flourished in the
Steamboat Age.]



Historic New Harmony
PO Box 579
New Harmony, IN 47250
(812) 682-4488
[Site of one of America's most innovative communal experi-
ments.]



Howard Steamboat Museum
1101 E. Market Street
Jeffersonville, IN 47130
(812) 283-3728

[Restored home of the family that operated the Howard Boat Yards in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Across the street, Jeff Boat remains one of the few active boatyards on America's inland rivers.]



Lanier Mansion State Historic Site
511 West First Street
Madison, IN 47250
(812) 265-3526



KENTUCKY:

Portland Museum
2308 Portland Ave.
Louisville, KY 40212
(502) 776-7678

[Wonderful exhibit of the first canal built to bypass the Falls of the Ohio, and the community that developed around it.]



MISSOURI:

Golden Eagle River Museum
Dee Tree Park
2916 Ellendale
St. Louis, MO 63143
(314) 846-9073



OHIO:

Ohio River Museum
Front and St. Clair Streets
Marietta, OH 45750
(614) 373-3750

[Interpretive exhibits focused on the entire history of the Ohio River.]



The Museum Center
Cincinnati Union Terminal
Cincinnati OH 45203
(513) 287-7030

[A major part of the permanent exhibit, "Cincinnati: Settlement to the 1860s," focuses on the role of the Ohio River in the early development of Cincinnati. The exhibit includes first person interpreters, an early 1860s reconstruction of the Public Landing, and an Ohio River packet, the **Queen of the West.**]



Rankin House
Rankin Street (off U.S. 52)
Ripley, Ohio
(513) 392-1627

[One of the best documented Underground Railroad sites in the Midwest operated by a leading white Presbyterian minister. Closer to the river in Ripley, the John Parker House, is a well documented Underground Railroad site operated by a prominent African-American businessman. The Parker House is not open to the public.]



PENNSYLVANIA:

Senator John Heinz Regional History Center
The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania
4338 Bigelow Blvd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
(412) 338-9006

[The new Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center will open in April 1996, on Smallman Street, one block from the River. A number of its exhibits will focus on the history and influence of the Ohio River.]



Fort Pitt Museum
Point State Park
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
(412) 281-9284

[Interpretive center at "The Point" dedicated to the early history of the area.]



TENNESSEE:

The Mississippi River Museum/Mud Island
125 N. Front Street
Memphis, TN 38103
(901) 576-7230

[A major museum dedicated to the history and culture of the Mississippi River.]



WEST VIRGINIA:

Blennerhassett Historical Park and Museum
Second and Juliana Streets
Parkersburg, WV 26102
(304) 428-3000

[The restored grand estate of Harman and Margaret Blennerhassett on an island in the middle of the river. This island became the center of one of early America's most dramatic intrigues.]




▼ **Curriculum Materials**

United States Environmental Protection Agency. *Always a River: Supplemental Environmental Education Curriculum on the Ohio River and Water*. Cincinnati: EPA, 1991.

[This 285-page interdisciplinary curriculum program focuses on the environmental aspects of water and the Ohio River. The curriculum activities are designed to be "integrated into existing curricula in science, social studies, mathematics, English, art and music."]



Glossary

- ▼ Broadside: a large piece of paper with an announcement printed on one side which can be displayed in public.
 - ▼ Calliope: a tuned set of whistles with individual valves and a piano-style keyboard to control them.
 - ▼ Cabin: Enclosed public space on the boiler deck [the second deck, above the boilers].
 - ▼ Draft: the amount of the hull that extends into the water.
 - ▼ Hogshead: large wooden barrel or cask holding from 100 to 140 gallons.
 - ▼ Gingerbread: cheap, showy ornamentation.
 - ▼ Manifest: an itemized list of a boat's cargo telling the place it was loaded [lading] , destination and value.
 - ▼ Packet: a steamboat that carried both freight and passengers.
 - ▼ Roustabout: an unskilled or transient laborer who worked as a deck hand or on the waterfront.
 - ▼ Sawyer: logs or whole trees bobbing just below the river surface.
 - ▼ Snags: logs or stumps sticking up from the bottom of the river.
 - ▼ Sidewheeler: a steamboat with the paddlewheels located on the sides of the boat.
 - ▼ Sternwheeler: a steamboat with the paddlewheel suspended from the rear end [stern] of the hull.
 - ▼ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: the engineering branch of the U.S. Army which has been responsible since 1824 for improving navigation on America's rivers.
 - ▼ Wooding: loading a supply of wood for fuel onto the boat. Passengers who bought the cheaper tickets had to help the crew during wooding.
- 

Notes

Notes



Credits

Selection of primary resources, historical interpretation, text, annotation of resources and coordination of teacher contributions:

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Cary S. Schwarz
Charlotte Skurow
Annette Stewart
Catherine Thomas
Peggie True
Gail Wissel

All photographs, unless otherwise indicated, are used courtesy of the Inland Rivers Library, a special collection in the Rare Books Department of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

.....
*“Oh the beautiful banks
of the Ohio from
Marietta”*



.....
Greater Cincinnati Tall Stacks Commission, Inc.
One West Fourth Street, Suite 512 • Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
www.tallstacks.com